Midsummer Madness

Newstex Blogs

Watts Up With That?

July 31, 2025 Thursday 1:00 PM EST

Delivered by Newstex LLC. All Rights Reserved
Copyright 2025 Watts Up With That?

Length: 2636 words

Body

July 31st, 2025 (Watts Up With That? — Delivered by Newstex)

Michael Kile

Few in the crowd watching the Wimbledon tennis, or enjoying strawberries and cream between matches, were aware of the silent killer lurking among them: another heatwave, allegedly caused by the bogeyman of our age, human-induced climate change.

Midsummer madness is a recognised medical condition. Typical symptoms include irrational behaviours, dodgy rituals, popular delusions, etc. It can occur in any season, of course, but especially in high summer on planet Hyperbole. The expression has been around a long time. In Shakespeare's 1601 play, Twelfth Night, or What You Will, Olivia says to the love-sick Malvolio: #8216;Why this is very midsummer madness#8217;.

Here it refers to less amorous activity, such as: (i) speculating about complex natural systems in a state of continuous change, such as the weather or cognitive ability of homo sapiens; (ii) using computer models to conjure up #8216;counterfactual#8217; worlds and climates; (iii) cleverly designing them to achieve desired outcomes, possibly influenced by pecuniary or other conflicts of interest; (iv) using United Nations agencies, academic activists, climate litigators, social justice worriers and the media to dupe the public into believing they are accurate descriptions of reality; and (v) ignoring compelling critiques of their assumptions and uncertainties, some ironically made by the modellers themselves, and recently artificial intelligence (AI).

Consider the following case study of climate alarmism. On 30 June this year, nine days after the northern hemisphere summer solstice, Mark Poynting, a BBC News climate reporter, asked the inevitable question: How unusual is this UK heat and is climate change to blame? How, indeed?

A second spell of temperatures well over 30C before we've even got to the end of June #8212; how unusual is this and how much is (human-induced) climate change to blame? Temperatures of 34C are possible on Monday or Tuesday in south-east England. They've been triggered by an area of high pressure getting #8216;stuck#8217; over Europe, known as a heat dome.

Some people might feel these temperatures are #8216;just like summer#8217; #8212; and it's true they are a lot cooler than the record 40C and more the UK hit in July 2022. But climate scientists are clear that the heat will have inevitably been boosted by our warming climate.

Dr Amy Doherty, a UK Met Office climate scientist: #8216;Recording 34C in June in the UK is a relatively rare event, with just a handful of days since the 1960s.#8217; The hottest June temperature recorded since 1960 is 35.6C in 1976. The next years on the list are 2017 with a June high of 34.5C and 2019 with 34.0C.

Other data from the Met Office quoted by Poynting indicated that over the decade 2014-2023, days exceeded 32C more than three times as often in the UK as during the 1961-1990 period. What about the 1990-2015 period? Were all the MO readings taken at statistically valid locations? Did they correct for the well-known heat island effect, especially where cities have been growing and so on?

Poynting's post was based on a media release from the Grantham Institute: Climate change tripled heat-related deaths in early summer European heatwave.

It was #8216;the first rapid study to estimate the number of deaths linked to climate change for a heatwave#8217;. Another summer, another super rapid climate trick.

The release made some extraordinary claims: that #8216;human-caused climate change (HCC) intensified the recent European heatwave and increased the number of heat deaths by about 1,500 in 12 European cities.#8217; Focusing on ten days of heat from June 23 to July 2, 2025, it #8216;found (human-caused) climate change nearly tripled the number of heat-related deaths, with fossil fuel use having increased heatwave temperatures up to 4C across the cities.#8217;

HCC apparently caused 317 of the estimated excess heat deaths in Milan, 286 in Barcelona, 235 in Paris, 171 in London, 164 in Rome, 108 in Madrid, 96 in Athens, 47 in Budapest, 31 in Zagreb, 21 in Frankfurt, 21 in Lisbon and 6 in Sassari. Dear reader, such precision!

Otto and her research team also issued a warning: #8216;heatwave temperatures will keep rising and future death tolls are likely to be higher, until the world largely stops burning oil, gas and coal and reaches net zero emissions.#8217;

Poynting also noted it was #8216;well-established that (human-induced) climate change is making heatwaves stronger and more likely.#8217;

As humans burn coal, oil and gas and cut down forests, carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases are released into the atmosphere. These gases act like a blanket, warming the Earth. (There was no mention of the most abundant atmospheric greenhouse gas, water vapour.)

So far humans (allegedly) have caused the planet to heat up by 1.36C above levels of the late 1800s, leading scientists reported earlier this month.

It will take time to work out exactly how much (human-induced) climate change has added to this heatwave's temperatures. But scientists are clear that it will have boosted the warmth.

One of them was Dr Friederike Otto, an associate professor in climate science at the Grantham Institute #8212; Climate Change and the Environment at Imperial College London. Co-founder of World Weather Attribution (WWA), she frequently appears in the international media commenting on climate change attribution (CCA) and extreme weather events (EWEs).

We absolutely do not need to do an attribution study to know that this heatwave is hotter than it would have been without our continued burning of oil, coal and gas.

Countless studies have shown that (human induced) climate change is an absolute game-changer when it comes to heat in Europe, making heatwaves much more frequent, especially the hottest ones, and more intense. (Dr Friederike Otto, BBC News, 30 June, 2025)

WWA's main benefactor is The Grantham Institute. Its mission: #8216;to lead on world-class research, policy, training and innovation that supports effective action on climate change.#8217;

WWA, incidentally, was founded in 2014 with Climate Central. It helped to secure initial funding and to #8216;change the narrative on links between climate change and individual extreme weather events.#8217;

Midsummer Madness

A physicist with a philosophy of science doctorate from the Free University Berlin, Dr Otto joined the Grantham Institute in October 2021, after a decade as director of the Environmental Change Institute at the University of Oxford. She appeared on the 2021 TIME100 list for co-founding WWA. The journal Nature mentioned her as one of the top ten people in science that year. In 2024 she received an honorary doctorate from Montreal's Concordia University and another from Edinburgh University in 2025.

Dr Otto is now a superstar in the climate space. The author of two non-fiction books: Angry Weather: Heat Waves, Floods, Storms, and the New Science of Climate Change (2020) and in March this year a #8216;gripping, provocative manifesto#8217;: Climate Injustice: Why we need to fight global inequality to combat climate change; she is not only on a crusade to ensure fossil-fuel carbon dioxide emitters pay developing and underdeveloped countries for alleged climate #8216;loss and damage#8217; under the United Nations Warsaw International Mechanism.

For her, the so-called climate crisis is #8216;not about saving the climate or humanity. Quite simply, it is about saving human dignity and rights #8212; for all of us.#8217;

Today, the neglect of most of the world's population means they suffer the most from the climate crisis. Climate change can only be understood against this backdrop. We won't be able to manage (human-induced) climate change unless we eliminate the historic dynamic of injustice, of domination and dependence between the countries of the Global North and Global South.

Researching weather #8212; and thus, the role of (human-induced climate change #8212; in the way I do is always political, and that makes it an uncomfortable topic for many scientists. (Climate Injustice, 2025)

It seems there is another agenda here. Has Dr Otto's cabal of climate scientists and supporters weaponized #8216;attribution#8217; to validate other controversial objectives? Surely not. If so, it would be another #8216;absolute game changer#8217;, wrecking Net Zero aspirations everywhere.

There are, unfortunately, no independent auditors of climate model simulations and projections, as is the case with companies in the highly regulated corporate world. All we have is a fallible peer-review process and research papers with multiple authors.

While at the Oxford University Environmental Change Institute a decade or so ago, Otto was a co-author of this paper: The science of attributing extreme weather events and its potential contribution to assessing loss and damage associated with climate change impacts. It might be possible, #8216;to make a scientific association between anthropogenic climate change and loss and damage#8217; using a probabilistic event attribution (PEA) approach. While PEA was an #8216;emerging science with many uncertainties#8217;, perhaps it could be relevant in the Warsaw mechanism and #8216;contribute to the policy process.#8217; More on that later.

The Concordia University presentation on July 16 last year was for Dr Otto's #8216;leading research, communication and justice work on humanity's role in climate change#8217;.

Otto is co-founder and lead of World Weather Attribution (WWA), an international effort to track and communicate the role human-induced climate change has on extreme weather events such as droughts, heat waves and storms.

By providing irrefutable evidence quickly on the likelihood of such events occurring with and without climate change, Climate Change Attribution (CCA) has helped shift the global conversation, influencing adaptation strategies and aiding sustainability litigation against polluters. (media release here)

#8216;Although she spends her days examining apocalyptic events, Dr Otto remains optimistic,#8217; quipped the MC in a twelve-minute video of the event. The gowned audience smiled and clapped in appreciation and possibly relief, knowing climate anxiety can be contagious and have a negative impact on mental health, especially in young people.

Dr Otto: The emphasis on climate change in reports on these extreme events have led many to believe now that climate change somewhat has replaced acts of God and that human-induced climate change is responsible for the disaster. (video; at 6 min.)

Dr Otto: Climate change is a consequence of inequality #8212; of putting the profit of the few against the most essential human rights.There is no solution to climate change without increasing inequality. (video; at 7.30 min.)

Do climate model simulations provide #8216;irrefutable#8217; evidence?A deep dive into the issue suggests otherwise. Newton's laws are irrefutable because we use them to put earthlings on the moon. Einstein's laws likewise, because earthlings use them to make atomic bombs. There are no similarly verifiable laws of allegedly human-caused climate change, but plenty of earthling assertions, simulations and storylines.

Most unfortunately, in the climate sciences, no such sample of Earth-like climate systems is accessible to natural observation and even less so to experimental testing.. With such strong limitations on the natural observation side and with in situ experimentation inaccessible, we are left with the only remaining alternative: so-called in silico experimentation (performed solely on a computer or using computer modelling.) (A Hannart, et al., American Meteorological Society, January, 2016) Reference

It was time to reach for my copy of the Darrell Huff classic: How to Lie with Statistics. A cartoon sketch on the cover depicts two characters. One asks: #8216;Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.#8217; The answer: #8216;45.6% of the time.#8217; As Disraeli said: #8216;There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics.#8217;

If Huff (1913-2001) was writing a sequel, it is more than 45.6% likely he would include WWA's rapid and super rapid climate tricks; and revise his chapter on How to Statisticulate: #8216;misinforming people by the use of statistical material might be called statistical manipulation: in a word statisticulation.#8217;

Given many countries are now sacrificing their energy security and economic health in pursuit of Net Zero fantasies based on dodgy computer simulations, Huff probably would use another word today. Perhaps he would ask AI for advice too. So here it is: an AI critique of WWA.

World Weather Attribution (WWA) has faced criticism for its methods and conclusions regarding the link between extreme weather events and (human-caused) climate change. Critics argue that WWA's approach oversimplifies complex climate systems and can lead to overstating the impact of human-caused warming on specific events. Some raise concerns about the use of climate models, which may not accurately represent the complexities of regional weather patterns and the influence of natural climate variability.

As for PEA, probabilistic event attribution in climate science, which WWA now claims can quantify the extent to which (human-induced) climate change influences extreme weather events, AI is similarly sceptical. It too relies on climate models which have #8216;inherent biases and uncertainties#8217; and can #8216;lead to overly confident statements about the influence of (human-induced) climate change#8217;. So PEA results must be #8216;communicated accurately, acknowledging their limitations and uncertainties.#8217;

Roger Pielke Jr. at The Honest Broker is one of WWA's most damning critics. In what should be an #8216;absolute game changer#8217; for politicians and international agencies that believe they can control the weather, #8216;limit climate change#8217;, or #8216;protect the climate system#8217;; and for alarmist climate litigators, judicial activists and social justice worriers, Pielke pulls back the curtain on attribution #8216;alchemy#8217;. He shows why WWA's methods are pseudoscience. They are, however, unlikely to accept his forensic critique, especially at this stage of the climate game.

Extreme event attribution is alchemy conjured up largely outside the peer-reviewed literature and promoted via press releases.

WAA is surely one of the most successful marketing campaigns in the history of climate advocacy. I call it a marketing campaign based on how they describe their goals: #8216;Increasing the #8216;immediacy' of climate

change, thereby increasing support for mitigation#8217;; and #8216;unlike every other branch of climate science or science in general, event attribution was actually originally suggested with the courts in mind#8217;. (The Honest Broker, April 5, 2025)

Nevertheless WWA will be celebrating today. It seems to have achieved one of its primary objectives. On July 23, 2025, the International Court of Justice delivered an Advisory Opinion on the #8216;obligations of States in respect of climate change#8217;. The ICJ's interpretation of the issue #8216;is consistent with Article 4, paragraph 1, of the Paris Agreement, which requires that mitigation measures be based on the #8216;best available science#8217;#8217;. (page 13)

What if the best available science is pseudoscience?

Michael Kile

This article first appeared at Quadrant Online in Australia on July 25, 2025, as Sweaty Brits and Fever Dreams: #8216;are climate models #8216;irrefutable' evidence? We know the answer to that even if the International Court of Justice doesn't.#8217;

Article Rating

Discover more from Watts Up With That?

Subscribe to get the latest posts sent to your email.

Notes

The views expressed in any and all content distributed by Newstex and its re-distributors (collectively, the "Newstex Authoritative Content") are solely those of the respective author(s) and not necessarily the views of Newstex or its re-distributors. Stories from such authors are provided "AS IS," with no warranties, and confer no rights. The material and information provided in Newstex Authoritative Content are for general information only and should not, in any respect, be relied on as professional advice. Newstex Authoritative Content is not "read and approved" before it is posted. Accordingly, neither Newstex nor its re-distributors make any claims, promises or guarantees about the accuracy, completeness, or adequacy of the information contained therein or linked to from such content, nor do they take responsibility for any aspect of such content. The Newstex Authoritative Content shall be construed as author-based content and commentary. Accordingly, no warranties or other guarantees are offered as to the quality of the opinions, commentary or anything else appearing in such Newstex Authoritative Content. Newstex and its re-distributors expressly reserve the right to delete stories at its and their sole discretion.

Load-Date: July 31, 2025